I: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

604 The gawel and waku-mielk relationship is not very strong. The
835 man would not ordinarily copulate with her in a clandestine affair. If he were caught he would be called a dog or other animal because of intimacy with too near a kinswoman.

Arndi ⟷ *Waku* (diramo and mielk) (mother ⟷ child)

593 There are two types of kinship in this reciprocal—mother and son,
604 and mother and daughter. Each has a number of varieties according to the closeness of relation and the consequently stronger bonds. They are: (1) actual mother, and her sons and daughters; (2) mother's sisters who are wives of the actual father and his brothers; (3) mothers, and children from nearby clans. There is another type of arndi who is ego's son's mate. She is near or distant according to the blood or tribal connection.

The essential element in the relationship is that arndi is the mother of waku. Her sisters are considered near mothers; they may be one's father's wives or near father's wives.

593 There are no taboos between a mother and her children except
835 sexual ones. Even here a waku often has an affair with a distant arndi. This is considered wrong, but it occurs. One's father's arndi would
582 come from nati and mari, while one's son's arndi would have to come from galle and mari. Except under rare circumstances there would be no possible chance of a son's marrying a possible mate for a father, just as the opposite union would not be allowed.

853 A mother suckles her own children but her sisters often help if she
847 happens to have two babies whose ages are close together. Sometimes a mother kills her newborn babe because it has followed too closely on her others and she has not enough milk to feed it. This would be done without the knowledge of the father, who would be most angry if he knew it. If a baby dies when born, the father is suspicious of his wife, believing that she might have smothered it in the bush.

847 Abortion, practiced for the same reason as infanticide, is not infrequent. The pregnant woman's sisters exert pressure on her abdomen with knees and hands.

847 When twins are born one is always killed, sometimes the second.
845 But usually, if they are boy and girl, the latter is put to death. Waltjimi's wife killed the boy and allowed the girl to live. There was much indignation in the camp, for it was said that a boy made a people strong, while a girl only caused trouble. A woman kills a twin because it makes her feel like a dog to have a litter instead of one baby.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

bartered from a passing lugger. In church, the situation got out of control when a bearded nomad came in dressed only in a lady's pair of waist-to-knee pink drawers acquired in Darwin and bartered for over five hundred miles.

With refreshing independence older Yulengor remained aloof from the fashion of wearing clothes. Daughters of Wonggu, the husband of twenty-odd wives and father of many children, advised him to don a covering, but he naïvely remarked: 'Why should I wear clothes? There's nothing wrong with me; I have nothing to hide.' He walks about as Nature made him, except for two strands of bush string tied round his waist. When I asked him why he wore the string, he told me it was for chronic back-ache.

It seemed only reasonable at Yirrkala to preserve Yulengor culture, to encourage the revival of old ceremonies, and to stimulate in the people an appreciation of their own social organization which often has suffered from alien contact. It is unjust for any alien to come amongst primitive people for the purpose of upsetting their mode of life and converting them to living and thinking as he does; and there is no one so pathetic as a detribalized aboriginal. He is adrift from his own society and cannot fully enter into the alien social life he apes. However, it is not to be expected that all the Yulengor customs are harmless and worthy of a place in their social life; some practices lend themselves to development, but others, such as infanticide, have nothing to be said in their favour. The birth of twins is rare, but if it occurs, the mother or a relative kills one at birth or soon afterwards. We were told that one of twins in a Yirrkala camp was to be killed, and upon inquiry learned that superstition was the driving force behind the custom. It is true that in the bush a mother can scarcely feed herself and one child, and that if she has two infants then at least three lives are endangered; so it seems probable that infanticide was introduced in past ages because of economic necessity. But as time went on,

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

the birth of twins came to be regarded as an ill-omen to be removed only by killing one of them. The establishment of a station, with its agriculture and food resources, removed the original cause of infanticide, and it became more than justifiable to discourage the practice.

Polygamy also can never be met by alien dictate, though unfortunately it is a persistent 'red herring', and some reformers have attempted to establish monogamy within a few years. In one instance, old much-married men each brought one wife to the station and then established bush camps about half a mile away in the scrub for their other wives and children. I never deliberately suggested monogamy to Yulengor; but of course they realized that I had one wife whilst some of them had three, eight, a dozen, or even more, and they talked about the poverty of my house and discussed with me the practices of a Christian community. Apparently the matter ended there; but after four or five years amongst them, I wondered if a change was not coming too suddenly when several of the younger men told me that they intended having only one wife each. This revolutionary change can be effected, when they are ready for it and want it, without serious disruption, for men may pass over their 'promised' wives to young, unmarried brothers who stand in the same tribal relationship of 'husband' to the women.

Again, aborigines are reputed to be pilferers; but their outlook is so totally different from ours that they cannot be judged by our codes. In their world of nomadism they innocently pick up and use whatever takes their fancy; everything edible is there for eating, and they roam at will with all their possessions in their hands. If a nomad finds another man's canoe in a bay or creek, he feels quite at liberty to make full use of it, paddling it away for perhaps twenty miles before leaving it for the owner to recover. Into this ancient world of the nomad came the foreign

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

684 stating his case to bystanders: 'I "pushed" these young
682 men to kill you because you took my wife; she was not promised to you, she was never yours and always belonged to me. That is why you die.'

Wife-stealing usually results in the woman being brutally beaten or speared, and whether she goes willingly with the seducer or is forcefully stolen makes no difference to her punishment. She shows no resentment, and indeed she regards lenient treatment as a slight to her charms.

848 Because of Yulengor marriage customs the question of illegitimate children does not occur. There are frequent illicit relations, but as every girl has a husband her children do not arouse comment. If an irregular union should be openly consummated, the children do not suffer permanently, for irregular births are absorbed into the horde and into relationships which they would have had if their mother had been correctly mated.

163 Women have about two children each, though some have as many as five or six and one I know has a dozen. Many children are born, but the population is not increasing, except on mission stations where medical attention is avail-
[165] able and child-welfare taught. In the bush, infant mortality is high, and long periods elapse between births. Children
862 are not weaned till they are five or six years of age, and I have seen grandmothers ten years and more after the birth of their last child successfully suckling grandchildren.

844 In child-birth Nature is allowed to take her course and no assistance is given beyond occasional pressure. If the child is born normally and quickly, it probably survives, and so does the mother, but when anything abnormal occurs there
• [845] is a stillborn child and the mother is often injured in a way that prevents her from having any more children. Blood accompanying the placenta is tabu and is meticulously buried. Ordinarily the mother is walking within three or four hours of a birth, and within a day she goes hunting.